

E1
process comprising the step of: reacting as reactants: (a) a dicarboxylic acid-functionalized material selected from the group consisting of dicarboxylic acid-functionalized polymers of: polybutadiene, poly(butadiene-co-acrylonitrile), poly(acrylonitrile) and combinations thereof; and (b) a hydroxyalkylating reagent selected from the group consisting of: a carbocyclic carbonate, a carbocyclic sulfite and combinations thereof; in the presence of: (c) a phase transfer catalyst under conditions sufficient to form a dihydroxyl-functionalized material.

E2
26. (Amended) The process according to claim 23, wherein said hydroxyalkylating reactant is a member selected from the group consisting of carbocyclic carbonate and carbocyclic sulfites.

E3
43. (Amended) The process according to claim 23, wherein said dihydroxyl-functionalized material has a molecular weight that is substantially unchanged relative to the molecular weight of said dicarboxylic acid-functionalized starting material.

REMARKS

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendments. The attached pages are captioned "**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE.**"

In a new grounds for rejection, claims 43 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as containing new matter.

The Office Action dated February 7, 2003 alleges that the Number Average Molecular Weight of the polymers in Example 10 (10,400) and Example 11 (11,300) are either incorrect, or are not Number Average Molecular Weights. The conclusion is based on a calculation using the hydroxyl numbers of the polymers, which leads to